

THE MOST PERFINNED STAMP IN THE WORLD?

Roy Gault

AN UPDATE - 25 years on!



In *The Perfins Bulletin* for April 1993, Joseph Laura listed **2,060** (approx) perfins found on the 2¢ red Washington head (Scott #332 and related issues). This is the result of an admirable, long term project, but I was intrigued by the comment ...

“In all probability no other stamp issue in the world has had as many different patterns used on it as this one does.”

That was how my Bulletin article, published in B266 (October 1993), started, with me fully expecting to finish the New series of Illustrated G.B. Perfin Catalogues by the year 2000. The best laid plans of mice and men ... ! But here I am, still in at the wicket, having just completed the 2nd Edition for the letter “J”.

My original prediction that the 1d definitive of King Edward VII would beat the ubiquitous 1d Lilac of Queen Victoria was based on having checked only 1,568 dies of the then current total of 21,450 (roughly 7.3%). Now that I’ve looked in detail at 24,386 dies, the roles have been reversed. Harry Skinner, you were right all along!

I can now state with confidence that the 1d Lilac of Queen Victoria, in use from 12th July 1881 through to the end of 1901, can be found with the most Perfin patterns in the world, currently standing at **7,675**.

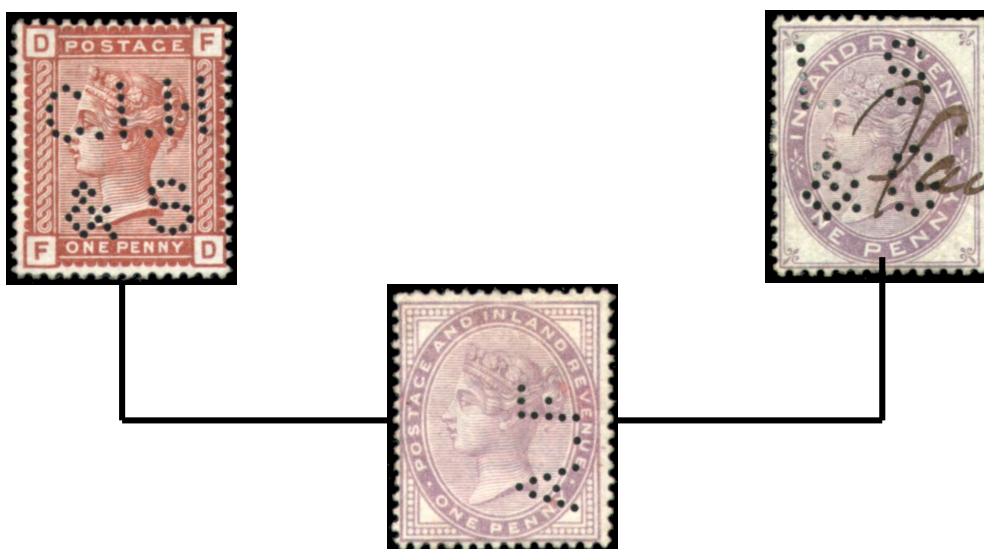


By comparison, the 1d definitive of King Edward VII, in use from 1st January 1902 through to 22nd June 1911, has only been found on **7,195** different dies.

When all's done and dusted, the top ten most prolific G.B. stamps found with Perfin's are likely to be those listed in the table below. Current figures as at *1st July 2018* are shown, all of which will increase as time progresses.

	Stamp value & description		DD		Stamp value & description		DD
1	1d	QV 1d Lilac	7,675	6	1½d	G5 Typograph	5,543
2	1d	E7 Definitive	7,195	7	½d	QV Jubilee	5,403
3	½d	G5 Typograph	6,729	8	2d	G5 Typograph	4,146
4	½d	E7 Definitive	6,450	9	1d	GV Downey Head	4,075
5	1d	G5 Typograph	6,405	10	½d	G6 Dark Colour	3,908

The mention of the Queen Victoria *1d Lilac* brings to mind the piece I wrote for the late Bill Shields regarding his great interest in what he called *THE* stamp, published in B319 (August 2002).



The issue itself was the direct result of an act passed in 1881 that required a single stamp to perform *both* postal and fiscal requirements. This was achieved by including the words 'and Inland Revenue' after the word 'Postage' which had appeared on postage stamps from 1840.



Die I

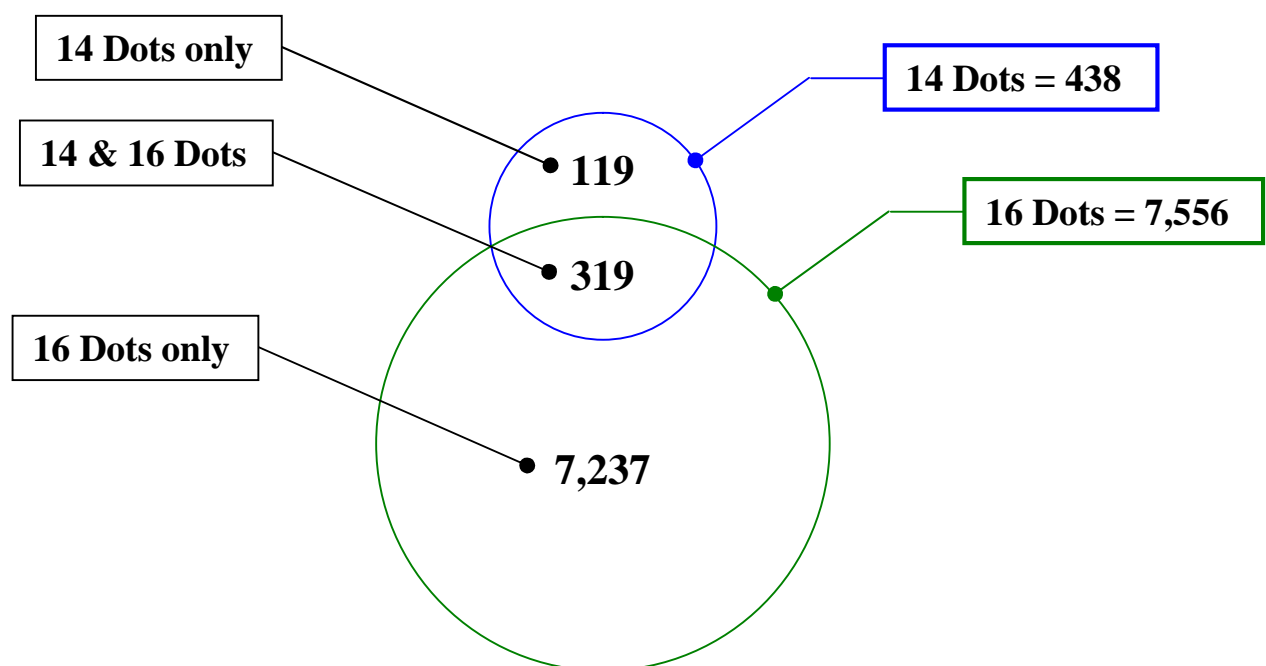
The 1d Lilac was issued on 12th July 1881 with *14 dots* in each corner, known as *Die I*. This die was only in use for five months before being replaced on the 12th December 1881 by *Die II* with *16 corner dots*.



Die II

The question Bill asked was ‘how rare are perfin on the 14 dot variety of the 1d Lilac?’ To answer this he started to compile a list of those known on the 14 dot variety from information from as many sources as possible. In 2002 the total stood at a modest 50 dies, although he fully expected the final figure to be 150 - 200 dies.

Sadly, Bill died in March 2008, but his list has always been maintained by me in my capacity as the Perfin Society Catalogue Editor. Bill would be more than pleased to know that the list now extends to some **438** different dies, more than double what was originally envisaged.



Note - **7,675 DD** for *all* 1d Lilacs.

In his ‘History of British Security Stamps’, published in 1968, Charles Jennings states ‘more than **7,000** different [Perfin] dies are known’ for the 1d Lilac stamp.

For completion, the figures for the 1d Inland Revenue stamp and the 1d Venetian Red (SG166) are as follows:

1d Inland Revenue	178
1d Venetian Red - SG166	991

All figures in this piece are correct to **1st July 2018**.